7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU31 Seri NU31

Geographical Distribution

The Seri Indians live in two small Indian villages on the coast of the Gulf of California, State of Sonora, Desemboque and Punta Chueca. From there they frequently go to Isla Tiburón in the Gulf of California. 131 [484]

Approximately 35 Seri families live in Desemboque and 16 in Punta Chueca. Only in the first of these two places are there five "yori" (mestizo) families. 162 [563]

Sanitary Problems

The Seris have no defense against certain diseases which, like measles and flu, they acquire in their relations with the "yoris"; these diseases cause many deaths among the Indians. According to the an- 164 731 [751]

[291] [854] [302]

Seri Indian woman of Desemboque, Sonora. *Photo Henriette Yurchenco.*

cient Seri Chico Romero, last Seri Governor, there was a great smallpox epidemic there about 1897 which caused the death of a third of the tribe which was living in Costa Rica, a small ranch on the coast of Sonora.

In 1955 measles appeared among the Seris, with a great number of victims, children and adults; the actions of the rural teacher Leo Sandoval, the Linguistic Eduardo Mosser and of the sanitation authorities of Hermosillo, succeeded in keeping the mortality rate down; nevertheless, the number of deaths reached 5% of the total native population. [165] [744]

226 Occasionally they'll stay a little longer and when far off in the Gulf, they will return only in the afternoon. But this is not frequent. Some of the bait catching is done during the night by the light of torches or Colemans.

As already mentioned, unfavorable weather may put off fishing for several days and when [731] that happens, famine becomes a real menace to [251] the Indians because they have no supply of food stored away for the lean day and no cash for such purposes.

Sexing

* 825 Sex differences in fishes have been observed by the Seri probably in the majority of the species from the list, although for several there is no data available. The tabulation breaks down by the number of species as follows:

	number of species
Sex differences observed	22
Sexes alike in all respects	6
Didn't know what differences there are	6
No data	8

The six species in which sexes are considered indistinguishable in size and color and in other respects are *Pescara*, *Pinta*, *Baya*, *Pinturera*, *Smyrna* and the undertermined shark *sp. C*. The inclusion here of the most important economic species such as *Pinta* and *Pescara* and of the sharks is interesting. It shows, in the main, probable lack of information rather than ignorance of differences on the part of the Indians. It was probably an oversight in questioning, for surely the sharks' sexual differences are usually known to them and it is improbable that they could never tell the difference between the sexes of their most important marine game.

The species in which they expressed puzzlement over the differences and simply indicated that they didn't know the answer were largely little known forms about which they could tell very little anyway, either because they occurred far away from their territory like, for example, the flying fish and the tuna, or otherwise were obscure species, too small to pay attention to, or finally, the huge monsters, too big for them to hunt and approach for more careful inspection.

In more detail, a number of different sexing criteria seem to be employed by the Indians. These differences are tabulated below:

Males larger	Females wider, larger in bulk, but length the same
Abudefduf saxatilis	*Cynoscion macdonaldi*
Gymnothorax castaneus	*Trachinotus paitensis*
Girella simplicidens	*Cynoscion parvipinnis*
Anisotremus davidsoni	*Mugil sp.*
Gillichthys seta	*Bairdiella iuciatus*
Sphoeroides annulatus	**Males more brightly colored**
Paralabrax viola	*Paralabrax maculofasciatus*
Females larger	*Hypsoblennius gentilis*
Epinephelus analogus	

Other sex differences considered by the Seri are structural and appy to the sharks. They associate the presence of the "2 penises" in the sharks and mantas with the males and their absence with the females. The "penises" are, of course, sex claspers present near the vent in the male sharks which aid them in holding up the female during the mating. These differences had been observed

[P. 33 B]

123 It was a beautiful morning in early May, and the water was still
[202] as a pond, reflecting all the sunrise tints like a mirror. After a breakfast of clams and broth, bread and sand and bronco tea, we made a big smoke and were answered by a similar smoke two miles off, so we knew our friends were on the way.

123 In one hour they began trailing in, the women each with a load on
482 her head, walking graceful and erect. On one head was an inverted
[415] turtle shell containing nearly all the family belongings done up in rags. On the top was the most precious belonging of all---the rifle. The man carried two or three ollas and other things on a shoulder stick. Everything necessary for their home was carried on their heads.

123 Soon the Indian Blanco was seen paddling in his *balsa;* he also had a load and had paddled all the way from Ironwood camp against wind and sometimes tide. As they were all very thirsty we gave them water around. They immediately went to the shore as it was low tide, and began gathering small oysters from the rocks. Soon each woman returned with a half bushel of them on her head.

About three o'clock and for an hour or so thereafter, Antonio Herrera, the Chief's son Chico, the old Chief Juan Tomas, two other men and one woman, came drifting into camp with their dogs. Each one was loaded with things. They were a pretty wild looking bunch. There was very little food and little water for so many.

648 The Chief said that a day or two before, some of his men had a
731 fight with some sailors (Mexicans) on the Island of San Estevan four or five miles off the south west corner of Tiburon. Nobody was killed, but the two boats, the wealth of the Island, had drifted away and were lost, leaving eight men marooned on the Island. They had gone there to gather *aescal* to make drink to celebrate a wedding to come off soon. Three men were five days without water. They sent up frantic smoke signals every day. At last they were seen, and help went for them in the only remaining boat on the Island. They were rescued.

648 The Chief and his men and women, with us, are going to Hermosillo
484 ninety miles afoot with all their belongings to ask the Government
123 for food and help.

142 The Chief looks to be seventy years old, a grim dark-skinned in-
[122] dividual with a thin fringe of hair on his upper lip, broad nose, wide nostrils, small black eyes. He is well-built and erect. None of these that I have seen so far have any fat. They are lean and sinewy.
[302] The young men are of large build, high cheek bones, some with hair on
[291] their lips, their long black hair braided; sometimes with a strand of red worsted. All were either barefooted or wore sandals. I saw one pair of sandals made out of turtle hide; another of burro hide.

648 When the Chief arrived, the sail of a vessel was seen over the
123 beach. Bob recognized it as belonging to a launch of a Yaqui Indian

[text continues on p. 180]